

Message Text

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TO ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS

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INFORM CONSULS

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SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE TO THE CONGRESS ON DRUG ABUSE

1. ON APRIL 27, PRESIDENT FORD SENT A MAJOR MESSAGE TO THE CONGRESS ON THE DRUG ABUSE PROBLEM WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS STRIKING AT THE "VERY HEART OF OUR NATIONAL WELL-BEING." THE FULL TEXT OF THE MESSAGE IS BEING SENT BY USIA WIRELESS FILE. HIGHLIGHTS FOLLOW:

IN THE MESSAGE, PRESIDENT FORD POINTED OUT THAT MORE THAN 5,000 AMERICANS DIE EACH YEAR FROM THE IMPROPER USE OF DRUGS; THAT AS MUCH AS ONE-HALF OF ALL STREET CRIME IS COMMITTED BY DRUG ADDICTS AND THAT THE SOCIAL COST OF DRUG ABUSE RUNS AS HIGH AS DOLS. 17 BILLION A YEAR.

HE POINTED OUT THAT WHILE CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS HAD
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BEEN MADE BY MID-1973, THE PROBLEM OF DRUG ABUSE WORSENEED

BY EARLY 1975. HE SAID "THE TIME HAS COME TO LAUNCH A NEW AND MORE AGGRESSIVE CAMPAIGN TO REVERSE THE TREND OF INCREASING DRUG ABUSE IN AMERICA. AND THIS TIME WE MUST BE PREPARED TO STICK WITH THE TASK FOR AS LONG AS NECESSARY."

HE ANNOUNCED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TWO NEW CABINET COMMITTEES -- ONE FOR DRUG LAW ENFORCEMENT AND THE OTHER FOR DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION, TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION.

THE CABINET COMMITTEE FOR DRUG LAW ENFORCEMENT WILL CONSIST OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AS CHAIRMAN AND THE SECRETARIES OF THE TREASURY AND TRANSPORTATION. THE CABINET COMMITTEE ON DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION, TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION WILL CONSIST OF THE SECRETARY OF HEW AS CHAIRMAN, THE SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE AND LABOR, AND THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE VETERANS' ADMINISTRATION.

THE PRESIDENT ALSO ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO SUBMIT LEGISLATION TO THE CONGRESS CALLING FOR MANDATORY MINIMUM PRISON SENTENCES FOR PERSONS CONVICTED OF TRAFFICKING IN HEROIN AND SIMILAR NARCOTIC DRUGS, AS WELL AS LEGISLATION THAT WOULD ENABLE JUDGES TO DENY BAIL FOR SPECIFIED CATEGORIES OF PERSONS ARRESTED FOR TRAFFICKING HEROIN AND DANGEROUS DRUGS. IN ADDITION, HE WILL ASK CONGRESS TO GRANT TO THE U.S. CUSTOMS SERVICE THE AUTHORITY TO SEARCH PERSONS SUSPECTED OF SMUGGLING MONEY OUT OF THE COUNTRY; TO PASS LEGISLATION REQUIRING THE FORFEITURE OF CASH OR OTHER PERSONAL PROPERTY FOUND IN THE POSSESSION OF A NARCOTICS VIOLATOR; AND TO WIDEN THE PROVISIONS OF THE LAW RELATING TO REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR SMALL PRIVATELY OWNED BOATS.

ON THE INTERNATIONAL SIDE, THE PRESIDENT URGED THE CONGRESS TO PASS THE ENABLING DOMESTIC LEGISLATION AND CLEAR THE WAY FOR RATIFICATION OF THE CONVENTION ON PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES. HE CALLED FOR AN INTENSIFICATION OF DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS AT ALL LEVELS IN ORDER TO ENCOURAGE THE GREATEST POSSIBLE COMMITMENT FROM OTHER GOVERNMENTS TO INTERNATIONAL CONTROLS. HE SAID, "WE MUST CONTINUE TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL AND EQUIPMENT ASSISTANCE THROUGH COOPERATIVE

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EFFORTS WITH U.S. AGENTS STATIONED OVERSEAS, ALL AIMED AT STRENGTHENING DRUG CONTROL ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN FOREIGN COUNTRIES. AND WE MUST CONTINUE TO PARTICIPATE IN BUILDING INSTITUTIONS AND A SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL TREATIES WHICH CAN PROVIDE A LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES TO THIS INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM."

IN THE MESSAGE THE PRESIDENT REFERRED TO HIS CONVERSA-

TIONS WITH PRESIDENTS ECHEVERRIA OF MEXICO AND LOPEZ MICHELSEN OF COLOMBIA AND WITH PRIME MINISTER DEMIREL OF TURKEY IN AN EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN COOPERATION AMONG NATIONS.

ON OUR COOPERATIVE PROGRAM WITH MEXICO, THE PRESIDENT REFERRED TO THE PROPOSAL OF PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA TO SET UP COMMISSIONS IN EACH COUNTRY TO COORDINATE LAW ENFORCEMENT AND DRUG TREATMENT PROGRAMS. HE ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITY FOR LIAISON WITH THE MEXICAN COMMISSION TO THE CABINET COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL AND DIRECTED THE SECRETARY OF STATE, AS CHAIRMAN OF THE CCINC, TO IMMEDIATELY FORM AN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO MEET WITH ITS MEXICAN COUNTERPART. SISCO

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